

# THE DREISER NEWSLETTER

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## **"ALONG THE WABASH":**

**"COMEDY DRAMA" BY THEODORE DREISER**

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One of the "lost" periods in Theodore Dreiser's life is the ten months between his arrival in New York in late November, 1894, and the appearance of *Ev'ry Month* in October, 1895. From the closing chapters of *A Book About Myself*, we know that Dreiser was a space-rate reporter on the New York *World* for several months during the winter of 1894-95 until he quit in disgust. And from scattered comments in Dreiser's letters and reminiscences, we also know that in the spring of 1895 he persuaded the music publishing firm of Howley, Haviland & Company to issue a monthly, with Dreiser as editor, to be devoted primarily to the popularization of the songs of the firm. Dreiser's brother Paul Dresser was a partner in Howley, Haviland and appears to have played a major role in this decision. Several months, however, would be needed to prepare the initial number, and since the summer was a poor time for the appearance of a new magazine, publication of the first number was postponed until October, 1895.<sup>1</sup>

What did Dreiser do during this long interval between leaving the *World* and the fall of 1895? In *A Book About Myself* and elsewhere he hints that he attempted to write short stories. A group of letters in the Copyright Office of the Library of Congress reveals for the first time that he was also attracted by the idea of becoming a playwright. This correspondence also has a significant relationship to one of the more intriguing bibliographical cruxes in Dreiser scholarship.

The first two documents, a letter and a title page, were undoubtedly enclosed in a single envelope. Both are on Howley, Haviland & Company letterhead, and both are typed except for the signature at the close of the letter. (Neither this

signature nor the handwritten correspondence from Howley, Haviland which follows is in Dreiser's hand.) Both documents have been date stamped June 3, 1895, by the Library of Congress.

Howley, Haviland & Co.  
Music Publishers  
4 East 20th Street  
New York, May 31, 1895.

To  
Librarian of Congress  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

Enclosed please find check for fifty cents,  
for copyright of the following,

"ALONG THE WABASH" Comedy Drama by Theodore  
Dreisser, two copies of the above will be sent  
later.

Respectfully,

Howley Haviland & Co.

Howley, Haviland & Co.  
Music Publishers  
4 East 20th Street  
New York

ALONG THE WABASH

COMEDY DRAMA

BY

THEODORE DREISSER

COPYRIGHT 1895, by Theodore Dreisser.

The third and fourth documents are a form letter requesting the address and nationality of Theodore Dreisser and a response to this letter. The form letter is printed except for handwritten entries for dates and for Dreiser's name. (It is dated June 3, 1895.) No doubt it is in the records of the Copyright Office because it was returned with the reply. The reply is handwritten:

Address

4 East 20th St.  
New York.

American

HH&Co

What is one to make of these documents? First, there is the matter of Dreiser's name, which is spelled "Dreisser" three times by Howley, Haviland. Since this spelling is not recorded anywhere else as a variation used by Dreiser, it is probably a misspelling by a Howley, Haviland secretary, perhaps on the analogy of the double "s" in the name of the more familiar Paul Dresser.

Of much more importance is Dreiser's interest in writing a play during this slack period in his career. He had of course been fascinated with the stage for several years. In St. Louis he had sought and won the position of drama reviewer for the *Globe-Democrat* and had even attempted to write a comic opera entitled *Jeremiah I*. With only the plot roughed out, "Already I saw myself in New York, rich, famous." Now, some two years later, he was indeed in New York, and his dream of wealth and fame to be won in the theatre was no doubt still intact. Significantly, however, the work projected by Dreiser in the spring of 1895 is not a comic opera but a comedy drama. Readers of *Sister Carrie* will recall that Carrie has made a great success in meretricious comic operas of the order of *Jeremiah I*. Ames, who recognizes the depth and worth of Carrie's dramatic abilities, encourages her to go into comedy drama--in effect, any modern play not a tragedy--where her qualities will be more readily appreciated and valued. Four years away from the writing of *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser had apparently made a similar evaluation of his own talents and capabilities.

A second major area of interest is the title and implied subject matter of Dreiser's play. The play was apparently never written. A deposit copy was never received by the

Library of Congress, and the work is not mentioned in any of Dreiser's correspondence or memoirs. We therefore do not know what Dreiser had in mind in connection with the title "Along the Wabash." But it is nevertheless intriguing that in May, 1895, he was thinking of a play related to his Indiana background and that this play was to have the phrase "along the Wabash" as its title. Dreiser claimed that the idea for the song "On the Banks of the Wabash" was his own. As he recalled on several occasions, he sketched out the chorus and first verse of the song during an idle moment in the summer of 1897 and his brother Paul then completed and perfected the song. The assertion has never been supported by any substantial evidence, and indeed it has recently been challenged.<sup>3</sup> But the opening line of the chorus of "On the Banks of the Wabash" is "Oh, the moonlight's fair tonight along the Wabash." Although Dreiser's Indiana play was never written, its title and perhaps some of its sentiments seem to have stuck in his mind. That they emerged in a great popular success which was in a form analogous to a comic opera and which materially benefited someone else were ironies that Dreiser no doubt appreciated more in retrospect than at the time.

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<sup>1</sup>The best accounts of this period of Dreiser's career are in W. A. Swanberg, *Dreiser* (New York, 1965) and Ellen Moers, *Two Dreisers* (New York, 1969).

<sup>2</sup>*A Book About Myself* (New York, 1922), p. 194.

<sup>3</sup>Richard W. Dowell, "'On the Banks of the Wabash': A Musical Whodunit," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 66 (June 1970), 95-109.

# DREISER AND THE WINEBRENNARIANS

D. G. Kehl

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In the final chapter of Book Two of Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, Clyde Griffiths, desperate to be rid of the pregnant Roberta Alden so he can court the favor of socially prominent Sondra Finchley, takes Roberta to Grass Lake, where he intends to drown her and make it appear as an accident. But when they arrive at the lake, Clyde discovers it to be much more briskly tenanted than he had anticipated. "Here now," Dreiser writes, "it was the summer seat and gathering place of some small religious organization or group--the Winebrennarians of Pennsylvania--as it proved with a tabernacle and numerous cottages across the lake from the station."<sup>1</sup> Clyde immediately recognizes the difficulty: the lake is not lonely enough, "probably continually observed by members of this religious group" (p. 65). His problem is further compounded when Roberta, who considers the presence of the religious group "cute," asks, "Why couldn't we be married over there by the minister of that church?" (p. 65).

The significance of this allusive detail has been overlooked or perhaps dismissed as yet another bit of superfluous Dreiserian documentation. But in view of recent "homage" to Dreiser,<sup>2</sup> of the resurgence of interest in Dreiser as artist, the detail invites meticulous consideration. If Haskell M. Block is correct in his observation that "only recently have readers begun to appreciate Dreiser as artist,"<sup>3</sup> the trend is both encouraging and challenging.

A consideration of Dreiser's allusion prompts a number of questions: Who were the Winebrennarians, and what were their beliefs? Why did Dreiser refer to them by name? Why did he choose this particular religious group rather than another, such as the Quakers, whose "ideal" he was becoming "very much interested in"<sup>4</sup> and from whom he drew the protagonist of *The Bulwark*? What possible significance does the allusion have in the novel and particularly in this dramatic chapter?

The "Winebrennarians" were a revivalistic group in which Elvira Griffiths, Clyde's mother, would have felt very much at home. The extant denomination, officially "The Churches of God in North America," had its beginnings in 1825, when John

Winebrenner and a few followers separated from the German Reformed Church of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, after being repeatedly locked out of his church primarily because of opposition to his aggressively evangelistic stance.<sup>5</sup> J. A. Parthemore, editor of the denomination's publishing house, feels certain that Dreiser's "reference to 'the Winebrennarians of Pennsylvania' is a reference to our church group. Our church body, as a church body, has studiously avoided the label 'Winebrennarians,' but this name has been frequently used, especially in an earlier time by other church groups in referring to us."

It is curious and perhaps significant that Dreiser altered fact for his fictive purpose in putting members of this Pennsylvania-based church in upstate New York. Both Parthemore and Dr. Richard Kern, church historian and past president of Winebrenner Seminary in Findlay, Ohio, agree that the group never had a campsite in New York. "We do not have any churches in New York State--and did not in the 1920's," Parthemore insists. "So, I am sure we would not have a camp in upstate New York." The fact that Dreiser--whose passion for factuality prompted him to take Helen Richardson for a detailed tour of upper New York, including a boat ride on Big Moose Lake--chose to alter this factual detail would seem to indicate that, being cognizant of the group's beliefs and image, he selected them less for documentation than for their symbolic significance as part of his fictive purpose.

An obvious significance has already been suggested, the similarity of the "Winebrennarians" to Asa and Elvira Griffiths' "Door of Hope," the "Bethel Independent Mission." Further, Dr. Kern suggests that "the 'summer seat and gathering place' at a lake in upstate New York in the Adirondacks sounds very much as though the 'Cautauqua'-type of church meeting were intended. The Chautauqua meeting and circuit were highly representative of American pietistic-revivalistic Protestantism at the turn of the century. Probably Dreiser had this sort of representative religious attitude in mind when he located the Winebrennarians (which are an *indigenous* American church and a product of the highly idealistic 'age of American innocence' in the 19th century) in upstate New York." Clyde is also, in a sense at least, a product of this same "highly idealistic age of American innocence," and therefore an apt figure of an "American tragedy."

It is further significant that the very presence of the "Winebrennarians" at least delays Clyde's nefarious plan.

The seemingly ubiquitous members of the religious group, thought by Clyde to be continually observing any action on the lake, become personified extensions of his mother's teachings. Furthermore, their presence at the lake, along with Roberta's suggestion that she and Clyde be married by the "Winebrennarian" minister, presents to Clyde an alternative course of action, thus creating a moment of psychological depth, a sense of "unending mental crucifixion" (p. 66).

The brief incident, with its allusion, forces Clyde to exercise his will, feeble though it may be throughout the novel. The reader is caused to empathize with Clyde and, as Robert Penn Warren pointed out, "in the process live our own secret sense of doom which is the backdrop of our favorite dramas of the will."<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the real significance of Dreiser's allusion to the "Winebrennarians" lies in the group's strong emphasis on free will. According to Dr. Kern, "the emphasis . . . has been on 'free will' as opposed to a rigid predestinarian system." In an 1849 publication, John Winebrenner wrote: "She [the denomination] believes in the free, moral agency of man, that he has moral ability, because commanded to repent and believe, in order to be saved; and that the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation has no foundation in the oracles of God."<sup>7</sup> This same firm belief in the "free moral agency of man, as opposed to his unconditional election" was reaffirmed by the denomination in its centennial year, 1925.<sup>8</sup>

Dreiser, with his growing interest in the religious and mystical "ideal" that was to reach a peak in *The Bulwark*, must have been aware not only of the "Winebrennarians'" pietistic-revivalistic practices but also of their strong emphasis on free will. The presence, at Grass Lake, of this particular group adds an element of irony to Clyde's story. Their mere presence tacitly forces the drama of decision versus determinism, of choice versus chance, of will versus *wyrd* (as suggested, for example, by the haunting *weir-weir* bird). Clyde, confronted with the prospect of taking Roberta to the tabernacle across the lake and being married by the "Winebrennarian" minister or of taking her to Big-Bittern and going through with his plan of drowning her, confirms his earlier decisions by choosing the latter.

The irony is double-edged in that Clyde's pursuit of Sondra, with the wealth and position she represents, is essentially an attempt to achieve freedom of the will. Clyde seeks wealth and position not so much for themselves as for

the freedom of the will he delusively imagines them to bring. This point is made early in the novel when Clyde stands admiring the grandeur of the Green-Davidson Hotel. "This, then, most certainly was what it meant to be rich, to be a person of consequence in the world--to have money. *It meant that you did what you pleased. That other people, like himself, waited upon you. That you possessed all of these luxuries. That you went how, where and when you pleased*" (p. 45; italics mine). Later, walking up and down Wykeagy Avenue, looking at the fine houses there, Clyde thinks, "It was so hard to be poor, not to have money and position and *to be able to do in life exactly as you wished*" (p. 273; italics mine). Clyde, seeking wealth and position so he can be free to exercise his will, makes a series of choices which, ironically, shape an irrevocable destiny of bondage. In rejecting the tabernacle of the free-will "Winebrennarians," he passes the point of no return.

Malcolm Muggeridge has written, "Mystics and great artists know--what is hidden from other men--that our free will is shaped by our passions into an inescapable destiny. Prometheus is both bound and free."<sup>9</sup> Probably no one, not even those who have recently been admiring his artistry, would consider Dreiser a "great artist," nor could he be considered a "mystic," although his later writings show that he was moving in that direction. Yet, through his allusion to the "Winebrennarians," Dreiser artfully conveys the mystique of will versus *wyrd*. Clyde Griffiths, though assuredly no Prometheus, seeks, through wealth and position, the freedom of his will, only to discover that his will has been shaped by his passions into an inescapable destiny. In seeking to be free he has become bound.

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore Dreiser, *An American Tragedy* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1925), Vol. 2, p. 65. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in the text.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Robert Penn Warren, *Homage to Dreiser* (New York: Random House, 1970), especially pp. 96-143.

<sup>3</sup>*Naturalistic Triptych: The Fictive and the Real in Zola, Mann, and Dreiser* (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 76.

<sup>4</sup>*Letters of Theodore Dreiser*, ed. Robert H. Elias (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959), Vol. 3, p. 822.



<sup>5</sup>S. G. Yahn, *History of the Churches of God in North America* (Harrisburg Pennsylvania: Central Publishing House, 1925), p. 29.

<sup>6</sup>Warren, p. 116.

<sup>7</sup>Yahn, pp. 108-09.

<sup>8</sup>Yahn, p. 113.

<sup>9</sup>*Jesus Rediscovered* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale, 1969), p. 21.

## A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF JENNIE GERHARDT

**Beverlee Calvert**

Sixty-two is the number of chapters in *Jennie Gerhardt*, and sixty-two is Lester Kane's age when he died. This parallel will be the starting point, then, in a structural analysis of the book.

Each of the 62 chapters is untitled, which tends to draw attention to the number as well as the content and suggests that the novel is also the story of Lester Kane and his fate when he moved out of the social sphere into which he had been born. Lester is nowhere on the scene when the story opens in 1880, making his first appearance in Chapter 16, but there is a "Lester Kane", and his name is Senator Brander. He seduces Jennie, and while he talks of marriage, both to Jennie and her family, he never makes a public statement about his intentions before he returns to Washington, where he subsequently dies. Before he does, however, he has provided financial assistance for Jennie and her family and "branded" her as a loose woman by fathering her child. The whole affair begins in late autumn and ends in late autumn, one year later, with the birth of Senator Brander's child, Vesta.

When Dreiser writes Brander out of Jennie's life, Brander is fifty-two. Similarly, when Lester decides to leave Jennie, he is fifty-two. So Dreiser seems to be saying that both men are of the same nature in their attitudes toward Jennie and in their use of Jennie, also that their lives parallel each other

to such a point that the action of the story overlaps. Beyond Brander, the novel develops Kane, as he provides the "marriage" Brander always talked about; therefore, Kane lives the Brander years-extended.

Fifty-two, the age of Brander at his death, is also the number of weeks in a year. Whether this parallel was the overt plan of Dreiser or simply a coincidence, it does give the book a sub-structure of flow, of natural unity, in tune with the rhythmic flow of life, a concern found frequently in Dreiser's work. Can this very structured organization be carried to a greater degree? Perhaps so, for just as each of the fifty-two weeks breaks down into seven-day units, the novel falls into seven-chapter units.

The first unit, the clandestine courtship as far as Brander's world is concerned, culminates in Jennie's complete surrender to him at the end of Chapter 7. According to her father's and society's standards, Jennie has transgressed.

The results of that transgression consume the next seven chapters. That crisis is resolved in Chapter 14, when Jennie's father indicates that he has forgiven her.

The next seven chapters concern themselves with Jennie's next conflict. Working in Cleveland, she meets a "Brander-figure," a thirty-four-year-old bachelor from the *financially* important segment of society (as Brander had been *politically* important). It would seem that this is her "kind" of man, as indicated by the chemical attraction or interaction that takes place between her and Brander/Kane. At the end of Chapter 21, Jennie's fate has been determined. Gerhardt's arms have been burned; the family will need financial help; and Jennie, in her own mind, knows what direction her life will take. She is prepared to go with Lester and on his own terms. She cannot hope that he will marry her, for eventually he will find out about her transgression and Vesta.

Chapter 28 (the next seven-chapter unit) ends with Lester's knowledge that Jennie has a daughter, and the thread that connects Brander to him, through Jennie, is complete.

Chapter 35 ends with Jennie's decision that she must somehow atone for her sins by leaving Lester and assuming responsibility for her father.

Lester discovers her intention, however, in the subsequent chapter. Their relationship takes on the overtones of common-

law marriage, as he (Lester) provides them with a home in the suburbs (Hyde Park), becomes a father to Vesta, and opens his home to Jennie's father, in an era when children still assumed responsibility for the well-being of their parents and their spouse's parents. Lester has clashes with both his brother and father over this new life of his, and at the close of this cycle (Chapter 42), Lester learns that under the terms of his father's will he must make some choices. If he continues to live beyond the conventions of society with Jennie, but marries her, he can expect no more than ten thousand dollars a year. If he lives with her but does not marry her, he will get nothing. If he gives her up and returns to the family business and circle of friends, he will be reinstated into the family's good graces, financially as well as within their filial obligations. He learns that he will have three years to make up his mind.

Lester tries to make it on his own financially. But by the end of Chapter 49, his real estate venture has collapsed and he faces a financial loss of \$32,000.

The next seven-chapter unit takes Lester Kane up to his 52nd year and beyond. But when Kane is 52, Jennie realizes that he, like Brander, is lost to her--Brander through death; Kane through economic expedience. It is at this point that Dreiser makes his strongest statement of what Jennie's life would have been like had Brander continued to live. Brander, because his life-style was built around the public position of politics, ultimately would not, and could not, have married Jennie, despite his declared best intentions. This probable outcome is underscored by Kane's action. It is clear to him that he cannot travel with the old crowd, enjoy the money which he thinks he has coming to him from his father's estate, even be permitted to engage in business of any consequence, if he continues to live with Jennie. So he leaves, and at the end of Chapter 56, Lester has agreed to marry Letty Pace, thus dashing all hopes Jennie might have for a publicly acceptable relationship with Lester, namely marriage.

The next sequential seven-chapter conclusion would be 63--but at the end of 62 Dreiser has chopped the story off, with Lester dead and Jennie alone, her future undecided. Dreiser emphasizes this continuing existence by closing out the story with a dash--indicating there was more to follow--a question mark, and an unwritten chapter.

# A DREISER CHECKLIST, 1973

Compiled and Annotated

by

Frederic E. Rusch

This checklist covers the year's work on Dreiser in 1973. Included also are a number of publications omitted from previous checklists. With the exception of abstracts in *Dissertation Abstracts International (DAI)* and *Masters Abstracts (MA)*, I have annotated all new publications I have been able to examine. Reprints have not been annotated unless they appeared with new introductory matter.

For their assistance, I wish to thank Mary Jean DeMarr, Tsokan Huang, W. Tasker Witham and the authors who sent me copies of their publications.

## I. NEW EDITIONS AND REPRINTS OF DREISER'S WORKS

*An American Tragedy*. London: Constable, 1926. Facsim. rpt. Portway Bath, Eng.: Cedric Chivers, 1973.

*The Bulwark*. Foreword by Lawrence E. Hussman, Jr. Portway Bath, Eng.: Cedric Chivers, 1973.

In the foreword to this "New Portway Edition," Hussman examines *The Bulwark* "in its relationship to Dreiser's life and his other novels" to show that "its message of faith and love represents . . . the culmination of ideas and emotions expressed even in its author's earliest work."

"Dreiser on *An American Tragedy* in Prague," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 4 (Spring 1973), 21-22.

In a letter to a Mr. Kohl dated 8 Feb. 1927, Dreiser expresses his pleasure in hearing of Kohl's interest in producing a play based on *An American Tragedy* in Prague and advises Kohl on how to overcome two technical difficulties that arose in the American production of the play.

"How He Climbed Fame's Ladder," *Success*, 1 (Apr. 1898), rpt. in *American Literary Realism*, 6 (Fall 1973) 339-44.

"The Real Howells," *Ainslee's*, 5 (Mar. 1900), rpt. in *American Literary Realism*, 6 (Fall 1973), 347-51.

## II. NEW DREISER STUDIES AND NEW STUDIES THAT INCLUDE DREISER

Brogunier, Joseph. "Dreiser in Paperback: Riches and Rags," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 4 (Spring 1973), 1-4.

Brogunier discusses the number, variety and quality of in-print paperback editions of Dreiser's works.

Burgan, Mary A. "'Sister Carrie' and the Pathos of Naturalism," *Criticism*, 15 (Fall 1973), 336-49.

Burgan analyzes *Sister Carrie* and *Jennie Gerhardt* to show that pity "becomes a genuine aesthetic force" in Dreiser "when it is mixed inextricably and consciously with the very stuff of his fiction--the gathering load of detail, the inflexible notation of the slightest shift in motivation, the slow rendition of even the most dramatic scene."

Chatterjee, Raj. "Genius Bright and Base," *Bombay Times of India*, 19 Jan. 1971, p. 8.

Chatterjee comments briefly on Dreiser's style and his behavior toward women, friends and other authors.

Dew, Marjorie. "Realistic Innocence: Cady's Footnote to a Definition of American Literary Realism," *American Literary Realism*, 5 (Fall 1972), 487-89.

Commenting on Edwin H. Cady's *The Light of Common day; Realism in American Fiction*, Dew briefly discusses Norris, Crane and Dreiser as "examples in support of [Cady's] finding social conformity in 'naturalism.'"

Douglas, George H. "Ludwig Lewisohn on Theodore Dreiser," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 4 (Fall 1973), 1-6.

Douglas argues that "Ludwig Lewisohn's treatment of Dreiser in *Expression in America* represents one of the turning points in critical thinking about Dreiser."

Dowell, Richard W. "Dreiser's Address to the Future," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 4 (Fall 1973), 10-11.

Dowell traces the history of a time capsule prepared by Max Lincoln Schuster in 1936 and presents the text of a statement Dreiser wrote for it.

"Dreiser and C. T. Yerkes," *PMLA*, 88 (Oct. 1973), 1188-90.

In a letter on Philip Gerber's article in the Jan. 1973 number of *PMLA*, William B. Stone examines Dreiser's treatment of Cowperwood's sex life to demonstrate that Gerber overemphasized Dreiser's identification with Yerkes. Gerber replies that the pattern of identification he noted in his article "by no means rules out Dreiser's ability to transcend and utilize his ambivalence regarding Yerkes" and that Stone's analysis places "too high a priority" on Cowperwood's womanizing.

Elias, Robert H. "Theodore Dreiser," in *Sixteen Modern American Authors*. Ed. Jackson R. Bryer. New York: Norton, 1973. Pp. 123-79.

Elias' survey of Dreiser research and criticism comprises the survey he wrote for *Fifteen Modern American Authors* (Durham, NC, 1969) and a nineteen-page supplement.

England, D. Gene. "A Further Note on the 'Dreiser' Annotations," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 4 (Fall 1973), 9-10.

England argues that there is no evidence that the annotations in a copy of Arthur Henry's *Nicholas Blood, Candidate* at the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas are Dreiser's despite the Center's attributing them to him.

Forrey, Robert. "Theodore Dreiser," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 4 (Spring 1973), 23-24.

This is a poem about Dreiser.

Furst, Lillian R. "A Question of Choice in the Naturalistic Novel: Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* and Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*," in *Modern American Fiction: Insights and Foreign Lights*. Ed. Wolodymyr T. Zyla and Wendall M. Aycock. Proceedings of the Comparative Literature Symposium, Vol. 5. Lubbock, TX: Interdepartmental Committee on Comparative Literature, Texas Tech Univ., 1972. Pp. 39-53.

Furst analyzes the actions of Thérèse and Laurent in Zola's novel and of Clyde Griffiths in Dreiser's to demonstrate that characters in Naturalistic novels do make choices. Consequently, they should not be "dismissed as necessarily 'passive victims of fate,'" nor should they be regarded as types rather than individuals.

Gerber, Philip L. "The Financier Himself: Dreiser and C. T. Yerkes," *PMLA*, 88 (Jan. 1973), 112-21.

Gerber discusses why Dreiser chose C. T. Yerkes for his Financier trilogy, traces the parallels between the characters and careers of Yerkes and Cowperwood, and points out Dreiser's omission of Yerkes' sense of humor in his portrait to suggest that "beyond Yerkes' shadow, the man we see spinning at the hub of finance in the Trilogy is Theodore Dreiser himself, a grim figure masquerading in a financier's dark suit and mild cravat."

Gross, Dalton H. "George Sterling's Letters to Theodore Dreiser: 1920-1926," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 4 (Spring 1973), 14-20.

Gross presents four letters which "reveal that Dreiser found in [Sterling] good companionship, and poetic tastes and philosophic attitudes similar to his own."

Hajek, Friederike. "American Tragedy--zwei Aspekte: Dargestellt in Richard Wright's *Native Son* and in Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*," *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 20 (1972), 262-79.

This extensive and detailed comparison of the respective crimes and punishments of Clyde Griffiths and Bigger Thomas includes their motives, their psychological reactions, and their legal defenses in relation to American capitalistic society. (WTW)

Hoffman, Michael J. *The Subversive Vision: American Romanticism in Literature*. Fort Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1972.

*Sister Carrie* is one of ten prose writings of the nineteenth century examined by Hoffman in his study of American romanticism. He finds in Dreiser "a tension

between [Dreiser's] belief in both rigid determinism and a sentimental Transcendentalism that has nothing to do with either religion or Emerson."

Hussman, Lawrence E., Jr. "Dreiser's Emotional Power,"  
*Dreiser Newsletter*, 4 (Spring 1973), 12-13.

Hussman asserts that Dreiser's "novels reveal a power analogous to that of Mahler's symphonies, the felt power stemming not from originality of theme or virtuosity in development but from the grand sweep of passion which soars beyond the finite universe."

Kanaseki, Hisao. "Dreiser no Buntai," *Eigo Seinen* (Tokyo), 117 (1972), 604-06.

Longstreet, Stephen. *Chicago 1860-1919*. New York: David McKay, 1973.

See Frederic E. Rusch, "Dreiser's Chicago,"  
*Dreiser Newsletter*, 5 (Spring 1974), 27-28.

Ludington, Townsend, ed. *The Fourteenth Chronicle: Letters and Diaries of John Dos Passos*. Boston: Gambit, 1973.

Ludington includes two letters from Dos Passos to Dreiser. In one (dated 10 Sept. 1933), Dos Passos apologizes for not sending a piece for the *Spectator* and comments on the world situation. In the other (dated 27 Nov. 1934), he asks Dreiser to sign a petition to the Spanish government on behalf of the painter Luis Quintanilla.

Moers, Ellen. "A 'New' First Novel by Arthur Henry,"  
*Dreiser Newsletter*, 4 (Fall 1973), 7-9.

Moers reports on her discovery of a novel by Arthur Henry published in 1890 entitled *Nicholas Blood, Candidate*. She suggests that "Henry had every reason to conceal from Dreiser . . . the existence of [the novel] for it is a smoothly written piece of anti-Negro propaganda; while Dreiser . . . was from an early period markedly liberal in racial attitudes."

Mookerjee, R. N. "Dreiser's Ambivalent Naturalism: A Note on *Sister Carrie*," *Rajasthan University Studies in English*, 5 (1971), 36-48.



Mookerjee, R. N. "The Emerging Social Critic: The Plays of Theodore Dreiser," in *Asian Response to American Literature*. Ed. C. D. Narasimhaiah. Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1972. Pp. 151-57.

Mookerjee points out how Dreiser's "interest in the supernatural, his ardent desire to pierce through the mysterious veil of life, his sympathy for the working class and his championship of the unfortunate and the downtrodden are revealed in [his] plays."

Morsberger, Robert E. "'In Elf Land Disporting'" *Sister Carrie* in Hollywood," *Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association*, 27 (Dec. 1973), 219-30.

Morsberger argues that the Hollywood film of *Sister Carrie* (Paramount, 1952) turns the novel into a "romantic" soap opera," because it ennobles Carrie and Hurstwood and "consistently shies away from [Dreiser's] grim realities."

Okano, Hisaji. "Sister Carrie and Morality" in *Annual Reports of Studies*. Vol 23. Kyoto: Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts, 1972. Pp. 189-216.

Oldani, Louis. "Bibliographical Description of Dreiser's *The Genius*," *Library Chronicle*, 39 (Winter 1973), 40-55.

This is a descriptive bibliography of copies of *The "Genius"* in the Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library of the University of Pennsylvania.

Paley, Alan J. *Theodore Dreiser, American Editor and Novelist*. Outstanding Personalities, No. 55. Charlottesville, NY: SamHar Press, 1973.

In this thirty-page pamphlet, Paley comments on Dreiser's critical reputation and points out the relationships between his life and the subject matter and themes of his novels.

Pirinska, Pauline. *Six Writers and Their Themes*. Sofia 1971.

Pirinska focuses on Dreiser's portrayal of American society in his novels and his problems with censorship in a chapter devoted to his life and works.

Pizer, Donald. "A Summer at Maumee: Theodore Dreiser Writes Four Stories," in *Essays Mostly on Periodical Publishing in America: A Collection in Honor of Clarence Gohdes*. Ed. James Woodress. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1973. Pp. 193-204.

Pizer demonstrates that the four stories Dreiser wrote at Maumee in the summer of 1899 "reveal in simplified form many of the themes and techniques of his novels."

Poli, Bernard. *Le Roman Américain 1865-1917: Mythes de la Frontière et de la Ville*. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1972.

In a chapter entitled "L' Eruption Peu Orthodoxe De 'Sister Carrie,'" Poli studies the inner failings of Carrie brought about by her social successes. Losing her identity in a constant change of roles, she is the symbol of the inhabitant of the modern city. (TH)

Pownall, David E. *Articles on Twentieth Century Literature: An Annotated Bibliography, 1954-1970*. 3 vols. New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization Ltd., 1973.

Pownall lists 72 articles on Dreiser.

Press, Viktor. "Velikii Amerikanets [A Great American]," *Oktjabr'* (Moscow), No. 8 (1971), 209-12.

In this commemorative article on the 100th anniversary of Dreiser's birth, Press briefly surveys Dreiser's life and works, with emphasis on his view of man and his social thoughts. (MJD)

Recchia, Edward. "Naturalism's Artistic Compromises in *Sister Carrie* and *The Octopus*," *Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 5 (1972), 277-85.

Recchia demonstrates how "Dreiser's and Norris's two novels represent two different ways in which a compromise between [naturalism's precepts and the principles of fiction] was attempted." He concludes that both methods are poor compromises, but, of the two, Dreiser's is "the more satisfying."

Rusch, Frederic E. "A Dreiser Checklist, 1971, Part Two," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 4 (Spring 1973), 5-11.

This is an annotated checklist of publications that include Dreiser as part of the examination of a broader topic and new editions and reprints of earlier Dreiser studies in 1971.

Rusch, Frederic E. "A Dreiser Checklist, 1972," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 4 (Fall 1973), 12-23.

This is an annotated checklist of the year's work on Dreiser in 1972.

Salzman, Jack. "The Curious History of Dreiser's *The Bulwark*," in *Proof, The Yearbook of American Bibliographical and Textual Studies*. Ed. Joseph Katz. Vol. 3. Columbia, SC: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1973. Pp. 21-61.

In tracing the thirty-year history of *The Bulwark*, Salzman pays particular attention to the differences between the text of a John Lane Co. dummy and the published text of the novel and to the disagreements among Louise Campbell, James T. Farrell, Margaret Tjader and Donald B. Elder over editing the work. The article includes plates reproducing Dreiser's contract with G. P. Putnam's Sons for the novel and the front matter and text of the John Lane Co. dummy.

### III. REPRINTS OF EARLIER DREISER STUDIES

Lynn, Kenneth S. "Introduction" in Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*. New York: Holt, 1957. Rpt. in Kenneth S. Lynn, *Visions of America*. Contributions in American Studies, No. 6. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973. Pp. 137-48.

Matthiessen, F. O. *Theodore Dreiser*. New York: William Sloan Associates, 1951. Rpt. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973.

Mencken, H. L. "The Dreiser Bugaboo," *Seven Arts*, 2 (Aug. 1917), rpt. in *The Young Mencken*. Ed. Carl Bode. New York: Dial, 1973. Pp. 552-61.

Orton, Vrest. *Dreiserana; A Book About His Books*. New York: Chocorua Bibliographies, 1929. Rpt. New York: Haskell House, 1973.

Warren, Robert Penn. *Homage to Theodore Dreiser*. New York: Random House, 1971. Rpt. (condensation) in Cleanth Brooks, R. W. B. Lewis and Robert Penn Warren, *American*

Literature: *The Makers and the Making*. New York: St. Martin's, 1973. II, 1877-1906.

#### IV. ABSTRACTS OF DISSERTATIONS AND THESES ON AND INCLUDING DREISER

- Bigelow, Blair Ferguson. "The Collected Newspaper Articles, 1892-1894, of Theodore Dreiser (Volumes I and II)," *DAI*, 34 (1973), 305A (Brandeis).
- Buchholz, John Lee. "*An American Tragedy*; the Iconography of a Myth," *DAI*, 33 (1973), 4399A-4400A (Texas Christian).
- Dickstein, Felice Witztum. "The Role of the City in the Works of Theodore Dreiser, Thomas Wolfe, James T. Farrell, and Saul Bellow," *DAI*, 33 (1973), 6350A-6351A (City Univ. of New York).
- Herold, Eve Griffith. "A Study of the *Bildungsroman* in American Literature," *DAI*, 34 (1973), 2562A (Ohio State).
- Oldani, Louis Joseph. "A Study of Theodore Dreiser's *The 'Genius'*," *DAI*, 33 (1973), 6962A (Pennsylvania).
- Reffett, Sid Shannon. "Visions and Revisions: The Nature of Dreiser's Religious Inquiry," *DAI*, 33 (1973), 5195A (Notre Dame).
- Townsend, Barbara Ann. "Superstitious Beliefs of Theodore Dreiser," *DAI*, 33 (1973), 6377A (Ball State).

#### CORRECTIONS:

The entries for Robert Forrey and Guy Szuberla in Section IV of "A Dreiser Checklist, 1972" were incorrect. They should have appeared as follows:

- Forrey, Robert James. "Theodore Dreiser: The Flesh and the Spirit," *DAI*, 33 (1972), 309A (Yale).
- Szuberla, Guy Alan. "Urban Vistas and the Pastoral Garden: Studies in the Literature and Architecture of Chicago (1893-1909)," *DAI*, 33 (1972), 288A (Minnesota).

## REVIEWS

### Dreiser's *Notes on Life*

*Notes on Life* by Theodore Dreiser. Edited by Marguerite Tjader and John J. McAleer with an introduction by John Cowper Powys. University of Alabama Press, 1974. xiv + 346pp. \$14.50.

Once a year for the last four years a rumor has been saying that *Notes on Life*, Dreiser's collection of philosophical notes, is about to be published. But time and again the publication has been postponed. Now, when the book has finally appeared, one opens it with four years of built-up expectancy. Will Dreiser's philosophical writings seem more coherent in print? What have the editors done with this complex mass of material?

It should be stated at once that *Notes on Life* is an essential book. Not so much because of Dreiser's philosophical system, which is incomplete and rambling, as the way these notes may shed new light on his works of art and his personal development. Dreiser started to gather this material as early as 1915, but the classification did not become methodical until the 1930's. Dreiser's last outline, which the editors have followed, divides the notes into two halves comprising 24 and 27 sections respectively. But when Dreiser died, he was still far from a finished version, and we can never decide what would have been included in the book if Dreiser himself had been able to select from the material. Not all of these notes are representative of Dreiser's philosophy of life of the 1940's. Many pieces are considerably older than that, notes which Dreiser might have wished to exclude or revise.

As the original corpus now stands, a typical section consists of a longer essay in fairly finished form, an essay of three to four pages, and a number of one-paragraph notes. Many of the shorter notes seem to have been jotted down on the spur of the moment, and much of the collection is consequently characterized by fragmentariness and incoherence. One may not detect an elaborate philosophical system in these notes, but the outlines of one are nevertheless visible.

Dreiser's view of life may be termed monistic determinism. Everything emerges from a life force or Creator who chooses to express himself by means of contrasts in constant internal change. Man is a tool, a mechanism, in this dialectic game; his most minute actions have an external origin. The creative force is amoral; good and evil are illusions, even though they seem real enough to man's limited view. The *causa finalis* seems to be the dramatic beauty that grows out of conflicting elements, a beauty primarily intended to satisfy the life force itself, but which may be enjoyed by man as well.

Marguerite Tjader and John J. McAleer have had a difficult task in selecting the most representative pieces from this vast material. Generally speaking, they have succeeded well. Lacking space, they have decided to leave out the longer essays, since these have been published earlier, most of them in *Hey, Rub-A-Dub-Dub*. (But how many of us have access to "Good and Evil" which was published in *North American Review* in 1938?) What they have included are the shorter essays and the one-paragraph notes. The result is that *Notes on Life* in this selection appears even more disjointed than the original manuscript. Another difficulty is that Dreiser filed copies of the same notes under as many as a dozen headings. How does an editor decide where they rightfully belong? Twice Ms. Tjader points out where else in the manuscript a note may be found, but this information should have been submitted for all the notes that Dreiser filed under another caption as well.

A problem which the editors have not been able to solve is that of dating. The manuscript contains writings from a period of about thirty years. Grantedly, it is extremely difficult to date the notes, but I think more can be done than has been achieved in this volume. It should at least have been pointed out in the foreword that the general development in Dreiser's view of life is toward a more and more firm belief in a creative force. The notes which reveal a purely mechanistic outlook on life may consequently be regarded as older.

"In the interest of coherence," Tjader and McAleer have changed the sequence of the five last headings in Dreiser's outline, and emendation which is permissible. But, without an explanatory note, they have also added a late essay which is not included in Dreiser's final outline of *Notes on Life*. "My Creator," written in 1943 and essential in itself, has received the prominent position of concluding the volume, although there is no indication that Dreiser wanted to include it at all.

Even though *Notes on Life* presents material which is fundamental for the understanding of Dreiser, the book means heavy reading. One does not willingly read it from cover to cover. *Notes on Life* is rather a reference book, a source of information on what Dreiser thought about particular aspects of life. Ideas such as illusion, contrast, beauty, sex, the creative force, and art keep recurring in different sections of the book. Under such conditions an index is absolutely imperative. Unfortunately the editors have forgotten to supply this guide to the maize, a fact which to regrettable extent limits the use of this book.

--Rolf Lundén

The following bibliographical information was omitted from the review of Richard Lehan's lecture in the Everett/Edwards 20th Century American Novel series (DN, Spring 1974, p. 25):

*An American Tragedy* (Audio Cassette). Lecturer:  
Richard Lehan. Everett/Edwards, 1973.  
45 min. \$12.00.

Our apologies to Professor Lehan and Everett/Edwards, inc.

## LETTERS

*The Dreiser Newsletter welcomes critical reactions in the form of letters to the editor and will publish them as space permits.*

### **Block that Emotion**

Dear Editors:

Lawrence E. Hussman, Jr.'s short, peppy essay on Dreiser (in *DN*, Spring, 1973) unfortunately epitomizes the cornball, sloppy thinking that has haunted any serious studies of Dreiserian fiction. Hussman begins by commenting on a chat presented by Jack Salzman during the Centennial, remarks that were followed by by comments of assorted members of the audience, especially those who "lamented the fact that critics have failed to identify the source of Dreiser's power." One fellow even had the temerity to observe "that the time had come to demonstrate this power through an analysis of the words on the page rather than repeat the attempts to establish it with the aid of the author's biography." *Mea Culpa*; these were my beliefs at the time and, for me at least, they are still operative.

A number of years ago I wrote a book in which I tried, gallantly but not too successfully, to demonstrate that this much discussed "power" of Dreiser's came from the obvious fact that he was a talented writer, a fine craftsman and that, despite some horrendous and obvious lapses so joyfully pounced on by his enemies, and despite a rather sophomoric attitude towards philosophical and political matters, Dreiser was an excellent novelist and one of the best ways to study him was (and I repeat) to critically analyze the words on the page. This is not "New Criticism," but just good, not so common sense. Otherwise, Dreiser is left to the praises of bubble-headed political dogmatists of the left and to the damnations of the philosophical idiots of the right. He becomes, sadly, something less than the fine writer he was.



Mr. Hussman states that the reader "perceives" that Dreiser's characters have an "urgent need to embrace the universe, to realize the ideal beauty." But just how did the man accomplish this effect? Later on Hussman compares Dreiser's novels to Mahler's symphonies, "the felt power stemming not from originality of theme or virtuosity in development but from the grand sweep of the passion which soars beyond the finite universe." These noble words might be of solace to those happy many devoted to the Norman Vincent Peale school of literary criticism, but, upon reflection, they merely manage to beg the crucial question, one that can be answered not merely by biographical or historical studies but by zeroing in on the text itself.

Dreiser was not a prophet; just a damn good writer who cared about his created characters and made us, in turn, care. He accomplished this by writing so very well. To idly blabber about his "emotional power" is to reduce discussion of the Dreiser canon to a comic-strip level.

Sincerely,

Charles Shapiro

## Dreiser News & Notes

Dreiser was one of fourteen Hoosiers named posthumously to the Indiana Academy in June 1974. . . . In August *The Best Short Stories of Theodore Dreiser* with an introduction by James T. Farrell, *An American Tragedy* with an introduction by H. L. Mencken, *The Financier*, *The Titan*, and *The Stoic* were reprinted in Apollo Editions, quality paperbacks published jointly by Thomas Y. Crowell Co., Dodd, Mead & Co. and William Morrow & Co. . . . Thomas Riggio of the University of Connecticut and Don Graham of the University of Pennsylvania are preparing an edition of the Dreiser-Mencken correspondence. . . . Dr. Vera Dreiser has placed the extra Simone Cast of Dreiser's hand at UCLA, where it may be seen in the exhibit area of the Special Collections Department. According to Dr. Dreiser, UCLA also has the Will Donaldson collection of Dreiser, holographs, first editions and a statuette of Dreiser by Hidalgo made of wax and cloth. . . . Robert H. Woodward of San Jose State University sent us a clipping of Herb Caen's column in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of 19 March 1974 which included the following story: "At the Mechanics Institute Library, that blessed oasis, Marge Booker noticed Theodore Dreiser's 'An American Tragedy' on a shelf labeled 'Recent Fiction' and mentioned it to a young aide who said, 'Oh--I thought it was about Watergate.'"

### A PREVIEW OF FORTHCOMING ISSUES

"Dreiser and the Powys Family" (Robert P. Saalbach). . . .  
"Hyde's Tabbs and Dreiser's Butlers" (Philip L. Gerber). . . .  
"Dreiser and Paperbacks: And Unpublished Letter" (Louis Oldani). . . . "The Scandinavian Reception of Theodore Dreiser" (Rolf Lundén). . . . "On Lexical Playfields: Further Speculation on 'Chemisms'" (Eileen T. Bender).

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